



JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERAN SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS

DVS STRATEGIC PLAN AND BUDGET

1. **ISSUE:** To support the effective implementation of the actions outlined in the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) Strategic Plan through optimum funding and staffing of DVS programs
2. **BACKGROUND:**
 - Virginia operates on a two-year budget cycle, and is currently in the first year (Fiscal Year 2007) of the 2006-2008 biennium
 - The 2007 General Assembly will approve modifications to the Fiscal Year 2008 (FY08) budget, adopted by the 2006 General Assembly
 - The Governor will submit his FY08 budget proposal to the 2007 General Assembly on December 20, 2006
 - DVS can be expected to submit a request for increased funding for FY08 – over and above the funds already appropriated by the 2007 General Assembly
 - The Department of Veterans Services' Strategic Plan outlines five goals
 - To strengthen outreach and marketing efforts
 - To improve access to veterans services
 - To maximize the flow of federal dollars to meet the needs of Virginia's veterans
 - To make Virginia an even more attractive place for military retirees by delivering top-quality veterans services
 - To improve the effectiveness, accuracy, and accountability of administrative services
3. **DISCUSSION:**
 - **Communications:** The top goal of the Department of Veterans Services is to strengthen outreach and marketing efforts. An effective communications program requires appropriate funding for personnel and operations
 - **Access:** Goal #2 of the Department of Veterans Services is to improve access to services. This means having the right resources in the right places to serve Virginia's veterans. Again, this means appropriate funding and staffing for the benefit service offices, the cemeteries, the care centers, and the education section
 - **Administrative Services:** In light of recent audit findings, adequate funding for DVS financial, administrative, and support programs is imperative
 - **Hampton Roads Veterans Care Center:** While it is likely that federal funding for this project won't be available for five years, the General Assembly has committed Virginia's 35% share of the construction costs for this project. DVS should continue to monitor expected costs of construction. If the projected costs rise, DVS should seek additional budget authority and the commitment of state funding from the General Assembly, so that this project can be completed expeditiously and kept to the planned scope
 - **Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery:** DVS should continue to press forward aggressively with plans to open this cemetery. Appropriate funding and personnel levels are needed to operate and maintain this cemetery to the highest standards
4. **RECOMMENDATION:** That the Governor and General Assembly provide the resources required for continued implementation of the Department of Veterans Services' Strategic Plan